

This Week from Congresswoman Betty McCollum

Congress Extends Benefits for Long-time Unemployed Americans

Yesterday, July 22, the House of Representatives passed legislation to extend basic unemployment benefits that have been denied to millions of long-term unemployed Americans. The extension of benefits legislation passed with the support of 241 Democrats and 31 Republicans. It was immediately signed into law by President Obama.

Congresswoman McCollum voted to support the extension of unemployment insurance after months of delays and political game playing by Senate Republicans. Congresswoman McCollum [commented](#), "While Americans search for jobs, unemployment benefits keep families from hardship and in some cases falling into absolute poverty. This safety net isn't designed to replace a steady paycheck but rather keep families afloat. Extending unemployment not only helps people out of work it will also stimulate the economy - an opportunity Congress can't afford to lose."

McCollum Introduces Energy Legislation

On July 21, Congresswoman McCollum [introduced](#) the Thermal Renewable Energy and Efficiency Act (H.R. 5805) to increase the use of proven technologies that produce clean, affordable and secure American energy. Taking a Minnesota model nationwide, Congresswoman McCollum's legislation offers incentives to increase the use of district energy and combined heat and power systems to heat and cool buildings throughout the country. St. Paul's District Energy facility is a prime example of an energy-efficient system, which heats and cools dozens of downtown office buildings and the State Capitol. The companion bill was introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senators Al Franken (D-Minn.) and Kit Bond (R-Mo.).

"The best kept secret in this country is district energy technology, and St. Paul's District Energy facility is a premier example of a system heating and cooling dozens of downtown office buildings," said Congresswoman McCollum.

Appropriations Committee Invests in Minnesota Priority Projects

Congresswoman McCollum understands that Minnesota communities and families are struggling in this difficult economy. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, she is working to meet the needs of the East Metro by helping to provide critical community investments. The House Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee, which Congresswoman McCollum belongs to, voted to approve its \$32.24 billion fiscal year 2011 funding bill for public lands and national parks, the Environmental Protection Agency, programs serving Native Americans, and cultural investments. This also includes the following priorities

for the 4th Congressional District:

- City of Maplewood: Gerten Pond Improvements - \$1,000,000. A major urban body of water, the Gerten Pond serves a large industrial and residential area in Maplewood, Minnesota. The requested funding will support improvements, drainage system revisions, and local environmental improvements to enhance the efficiency of storm water sewers.

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*Congresswoman McCollum visits with local officials
at the Renaissance Box Restoration project.*

Aeon: Renaissance Box Restoration and Housing Development - \$350,000. Support for this project will help convert the abandoned factory - formerly known as the O'Donnell Shoe Factory - into 70 affordable housing units and retain historic elements of the structure. This development will house formerly homeless persons and low-income working families.

- Voyageurs National Park Association, United States Forest Service, Land and Water Conservation Fund: Voyageurs National Park - \$366,500. A premier water-based national park, the Voyageurs National Park preserves a rich cultural history, natural environment and recreational opportunities. Funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund will acquire 5 parcels of land, comprising 73 acres, within the park's boundaries. These highly-visible lakeshore properties are at significant risk of new development and property subdivision if purchased by new private owners. Acquiring this land will allow visitor access to the park's lakeshores and sandy beaches while also preserving critical wildlife habitat.